



## Veterans Home - Chippewa Falls

Family Updates 12.22.2020

Dear Family and Friends:

This holiday season, we reflect on the challenges of the past year, we find ourselves thinking of how our lives have changed, new relationships we've formed, and all we are grateful for. Thank you for your unwavering support and collaboration.

### COVID-19 Updates:

We're thankful to have had no new cases of COVID-19 among members or staff following our last update. We continue to have one active employee case.

Here is our current information:

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Current <b>Active</b> COVID-19 Confirmed Positive:	<b>1</b>
Current <b>Active</b> COVID-19 Suspected Positive:	<b>0</b>
Cumulative COVID-19 Confirmed Positive:	32 (three members, three contracted individuals, twenty-six employees)
Cumulative COVID-19 Suspected Positive:	2 (one member, one employee)
Total Recovered Individuals:	32 (three members, twenty-six employees, three contracted individuals)

Our COVID-19 Infection Prevention and Response Action Plan follows guidance from local, state, and federal health officials. It ensures we're doing everything possible to protect those who live and work in the Veterans Home. See below for the full plan.

As a reminder, testing for all members and staff for COVID-19 continues twice per week. Next week, we do plan to conduct additional testing to quickly be able to isolate any positive cases to ensure safety for all. In addition, you can currently conduct closed window and virtual visits to stay connected with your loved ones.

### COVID-19 Vaccine:

As a reminder, we expect vaccinations at the Veterans Home to begin around the middle of January 2021. As soon as we receive information about dates for vaccination availability at the Veterans Home, we will let you know.

With that being said, we do need all member's updated insurance cards so that the pharmacy can bill insurance. Please get copies to Sally Blodgett, Business Office Director, ASAP. If we already have their current cards, you do not need to resubmit them. The member will not receive a bill.

Also, please be prepared to quickly respond to vaccination consents in the coming weeks if you are the activated Power of attorney or guardian. The time-frame for consent is going to be somewhat narrow, so please stay tuned.

While the vaccine is good news, we all still must continue to do our part to stay safe by limiting gatherings, maintaining six feet of distance from others when going out, wearing a mask, and washing hands regularly. Maintaining safety now will allow us to celebrate future holidays together.

**Holiday Safety:**

By now you may know: [the holiday guidelines released by the CDC](#) and Wisconsin Department of Health are clear— the safest way we can celebrate this year is by staying home with our immediate families. Although this recommendation is disappointing, we are truly fortunate to have an effective way to protect those we love and help secure future celebrations together.

To adhere to state and federal guidance, members are strongly encouraged to join in our holiday celebrations at the Veterans Home rather than going off-site. Please know this change in routine doesn't mean the spirit of the holidays is compromised. Our life enrichment team has thoughtfully planned activities that keep traditions alive and ensure everyone will enjoy a fulfilling, magical season.

Throughout this Christmas week, we have a variety of activities we participated in already and also will be conducting in the coming days. We are playing holiday Bingo, special holiday games, Christmas caroling, enjoying a special happy hour, and someone special is arriving to deliver Christmas presents to the members! The Culinary team is also preparing a beautiful meal on Christmas Day for all members.

As a reminder – please be sure to drop off presents TODAY so the members can receive them on Christmas. All items received after today will still be delivered, but not until after Christmas Day.

**Questions:**

If you have any questions, contact Katie Plendl at 715-720-6775 or [Veterans.Home-CF@dva.wi.gov](mailto:Veterans.Home-CF@dva.wi.gov). On behalf of everyone at the Veterans Home, we appreciate your patience and cooperation during this challenging time.

Sincerely,  
Megan Corcoran

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**Veterans Home COVID-19 Infection Prevention and Response Action Plan**

First and foremost, our priority is to keep everyone safe and healthy. We are in close contact with our medical director, WDVA, other providers, and state and local health officials to ensure we are taking all appropriate steps at this time. We are following guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), and state and local health officials to protect our members and staff from this virus, and are taking every action possible to prevent it from spreading in our care community.

The following is a summary of our COVID-19 Infection Prevention and Response Action Plan.

- Utilizing appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), as directed by CMS guidelines. Staff continues to wear PPE, including masks, eye protection, gloves, and gowns depending on the community's COVID-19 status. Members are asked to wear a face covering when interfacing with others or when out of their rooms.
- Screening and monitoring members and staff for symptoms. We have increased our screening and monitoring of members and staff for COVID-19 symptoms. COVID-19 symptoms include fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, or diarrhea.

We all play a part in keeping ourselves and others healthy. Please wash your hands often, avoid touching your face, cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue, wear a mask or face covering, and practice social distancing.

We continue to educate members and staff on COVID-19. For additional information, please visit the CDC's website at [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html) or the Wisconsin Department of Health's website at [www.dhs.wisconsin.gov](https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov).

- Tracing individuals who come in contact with anyone affected. The community will work with the tracing staff from state and local health departments to assess all who may have come in close contact with an affected individual. We will continue to follow all requirements in implementing the next steps which may include self-monitoring as determined by health officials.
- Testing members and staff for COVID-19. We are following all guidance from federal, state and local health officials on testing required for members and staff. The frequency of routine testing is determined based on the number of COVID-19 cases in the local county. Additionally, those who exhibit COVID-19 symptoms are tested to quickly identify and isolate members and staff who may be positive for COVID-19. Once there is a confirmed COVID-19 case, testing is increased to every three to seven days until testing identifies no new cases of COVID-19 infection among staff or members for a period of at least 14 days since the most recent positive result.
- Quarantining COVID-19 positive members and implementing enhanced infection control measures. We have established a designated area in the building for any COVID-19 positive members, and they are cared for and supported by designated staff. We continue to follow all infection control protocols as outlined by the CDC, CMS, and state and local health officials. COVID-19 positive members remain in quarantine until well and cleared by medical professionals, as well as meet the CDC symptom-based criteria for return to normal activity.
- Advising COVID-19 positive staff to take all appropriate measures. For the health and well-being of our care community, any staff member with a COVID-19 diagnosis is asked to quarantine at home, contact a medical provider for care, and notify their supervisor. We are following CDC guidance on the return-to-work criteria for health care professionals with confirmed COVID-19.
- Taking environmental safety precautions. Housekeeping staff continues to take extra measures to clean and disinfect all high-touch areas throughout the building. This includes countertops and tables, faucet handles, toilet flush handles, doorknobs, door handles, crash bars, bathroom and kitchen areas, elevator call buttons, and handrails.
- Adhering to safe visitation procedures. We are committed to offering visitation that supports each member's physical, mental, psychosocial well-being, and quality of life. Visitation may be conducted through different means based on the community's structure and members' needs.

**Please know the visitation options may vary based on the community's COVID-19 status. To discuss current visit options and schedule a visit with a loved one, contact Katie Plendl at 715-720-6775 or at [Veterans.Home-CF@dva.wi.gov](mailto:Veterans.Home-CF@dva.wi.gov). Currently as of today, closed window visits and virtual visits are available. No reservation is needed for a window visit.**

*Closed Window Visits:* Closed window visits pose no risk of virus transmission.

*Virtual visits:* We encourage loved ones to communicate with members by phone, letters, video chat, and/or social media. We understand that it is hard to not have visitors, especially family. Please

contact the community at 715-720-6775 for questions or assistance with these communication methods.

*Compassionate care visits:* Visitors who need to enter the community for compassionate care situations are evaluated on a case-by-case basis to assure safety for all.

*Please note the community will screen visitors for COVID-19 when they arrive for compassionate care visits.*

We are excited to see our members reunite with their loved ones, when able!

- Assuring safe congregate dining and group activities. Communal dining and congregate group activities may be offered while adhering to the core principles of COVID-19 infection prevention. This includes social distancing, face covering, and appropriate hand hygiene by members and staff.

We continue to be in close communications with our medical director, WDVA, other providers, and state and local health officials. We are also monitoring new information from the CDC, CMS, and state and local health departments to ensure we are taking the appropriate next steps.

Thank you for your support and understanding; we are all in this together. Please do not hesitate to contact Katie Plendl, Director of Admissions and Marketing at 715-720-6775 or [Veterans.Home-CF@dva.wi.gov](mailto:Veterans.Home-CF@dva.wi.gov) with any questions or concerns you may have.

Best,

Megan Corcoran

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Megan Corcoran', with a stylized, cursive script.

**Megan M. Corcoran, NHA** | Administrator  
Wisconsin Veterans Home at Chippewa Falls